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AUTHOR	Oberman, Ida
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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that the century-old educational reform movement known as "Waldorf" is an instance of the tremendous potential that semiotic representation holds for school reform. It proposes that Waldorf's staying power is hidden in the reform's semiotic supports: its symbols, motifs, and rituals. Rather than presenting Waldorf's official history, the paper concentrates on the representational images of Waldorf's institutional identity, or how the institution "remembers" itself. It begins with a description of the design of Waldorf pedagogy and its successful dissemination in various countries throughout the world. It then constructs the "memory map" of Waldorf, describing how its foundation story, teacher training and teacher networks, annual festivals and daily verses, curricular ritual of eurythmy (a form of dance), architecture, and birthday celebrations of the original German school serve to perpetuate the institution. The paper concludes that these rituals together form constitutive elements in a powerful liturgy of remembrance, and that the charisma of Waldorf lies in its manifold ways of sacramentally re-producing the past as reality for the present and guidance for the future. Appendices present photographs and verses associated with Waldorf history. Contains 72 references. (EV)

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WALDORF HISTORY: CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Ida Oberman

ioberman@stanford.edu
Center for Research on the Context of Teaching
CERAS Building, Rm 402
School of Education
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

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Focusing the semiotic lens

For any educator sensitive to the significance of semiotics, the case I am about to present will have special meaning. The century-old-reform movement called "Waldorf" is an instance of the tremendous potential that semiotic representation holds for school reform. The secret of Waldorf's staying power, I propose here, lies hidden in this reform's semiotic supports: its symbols, motifs and rituals. Together they allow the institution of Waldorf to keep its memory alive. 600-odd schools around the world in 44 different countries, call themselves "Waldorf" schools. The reform has survived across time and has retained its identity. What is more: it has been able to travel across cultural and class boundaries, and has still kept its form. Their teachers follow the same forms of decorating classrooms, developing lessons, designing their school buildings. Waldorf schools exist in inner city Milwaukee and in Montevideo, Uruguay; outside of Cairo, Egypt and in the heart of Vienna, Austria. In order to to understand the secret of transmission, I explore with you what the Waldorf icons are. Only then can we hope to understand what allows this reform to be both adaptive and stay constant across time, while crossing socioeconomic or environmental borders.

A note on method: I do not intend to present Waldorf's official history. Rather, I concentrate on the representational images of Waldorf's institutional identity. I am therefore concerned with that past which is recalled in the present. In brief, my task is to trace the institution remembering itself.

Three notes on definitions: I use "memory" to describe the act of remembering.[1] The Waldorf institution's memory becomes visible in those moments when members cite the past in the present . The verses the founding father Rudolf Steiner wrote for his teachers are not of interest in and of themselves. However, in view of the fact that teachers today recite a certain Steiner verse at the opening of every faculty meeting, this stanza is a rich source. The lectures Steiner gave to his founding faculty just

[1] Linde: forthcoming,1996, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1995d, 1995e,1993, and Bartlett: 1989

before the first school opened are relevant here not in themselves but because each teacher training uses the transcripts from this first Waldorf faculty study, The Study of Man , as its core text .[2]

I use the term "institution" to describe a "group that persists over time."[3] A gang as well as a corporation, a family as well as a fraternity, are by this definition "institutions." It is useful to realize here that the Waldorf reform remembers without by-laws or other bureaucratic measures, and thus functions more like gangs than corporations. I define semiotics as the encoding and decoding of messages, the study of the media by which communication takes place, and the study of the nexus of transmission, reception and interpretation of messages. With this in mind, I invite you on a swift trip across class, cultural and historical boundaries so as to adjust our eyes to the semiotic art forms of Waldorf life.

Three introductory vignettes

On September 3, 1991, 25 public school teachers gathered to greet 350 students at the door of their new K - 5 school in inner city Milwaukee. The crowd of children was mostly African-American; the teachers, a largely Caucasian group of Milwaukee public school teachers. The teachers took the children to rooms decorated in pastel colors, furnished with wooden desks, and rich with plants and water color paintings. In each room, the teachers started the day in a similar fashion: first, by saying the morning verse, "The sun with loving light, makes bright for me each day...", and then, by playing recorder with the students. After these initial activities, the fourth grade teacher told his class a story. He told about the Norse god Thor, with his hammer, and the one-eyed Odin, king of the gods. After the story, the teacher assisted the class in crafting candles out of beeswax. Then, at the end of the morning lesson, the fourth-grade children lined up at the door, and shook the teacher's hand as they walked out, singing in unison of being kings and queens.[4]

[2] Steiner, GA 293: 1919/1981.
[3] Linde: 1996.
[4] For a fuller account, see Staley: 1993.

This is an unusual structure of activities in an inner city setting. Few people play the recorder at home or at school, beeswax is not easily available in stores, and Norse myths are not commonly part of any classroom curriculum. The design of all these activities reflects practices of a particular reform initiative known as Waldorf. The Milwaukee classroom, 1991, reflected events that took place on the first day of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, 1919.

Two other Waldorf snapshots, though socio-culturally, economically and historically different from this scene in Milwaukee, offer intriguing parallels. The first takes us to New South Wales, Australia. The ethnographer Mary Henry recounts that while there in 1986, she admired "the unusual children's paintings, water colors in soft pastel shades" and witnessed classrooms with wooden furniture and children playing the recorder. The second scene is American. Three years later Henry visited a Waldorf School in Southville, Virginia, and saw "those same paintings, the muslin drapes and wooden furniture." As Henry puts it crisply, "Children would not paint blue moons on a yellow background, the whole class, in watercolor, in both the school in Australia and the one in Southville without some guidance." [5] Yet, as she went on to note, no directing mechanisms meet the eye.

Waldorf's pattern of recurrence poses a challenge to scholars concerned with educational change. The phenomenon of consistency suggests an internal vitality that allows the institution to be both adaptable and at the same time largely faithful to its original design. For an effective probe of this mystery, a semiotic mapping of the movement is essential. For those less familiar with Waldorf, first some background on the history of the Waldorf and a birds-eye view of the structures that define Waldorf schools, are in order.

Waldorf design

Waldorf started off as a uniquely German reform movement. Waldorf pedagogy was conceptualized and first implemented by the Hegelian philosopher-scientist

[5] Henry: 1993, p.67.

Rudolf Steiner (1861 - 1925). His first target group was the children of the workers of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory in the German town of Stuttgart. 1919 Steiner had been invited to start a school by the factory's owner, Emil Molt. Those early days of Weimar Germany, right after World War I, shaped the birth moment of this reform. In 1919, political tension and economic depression had gripped a Germany that hovered between a war lost and a revolution expected. Stuttgart, at the heart of Germany's industrial sector, was marked by this. In his autobiography, Molt described vividly how he made his decision to fund a school while in the streets socialist and nationalist "gangs" were fighting. In contrast to the socialist and nationalist blueprints of the day, Steiner's vision offered Molt a persuasive "third way" to secure the future of Germany: not through nationalist nor socialist systems, but through educational reform.[6] Despite tremendous political and economic instability around, the school took off. Over the following six years until his death, 1919 - 1925, amidst growing student enrollment, together with his faculty Steiner developed the Waldorf school's unique curricular and governance structures.

From its founding days on, six key points defined this school's innovative organizational profile.[7] First, the Waldorf school is a comprehensive primary and secondary school. Second, the school is not a school designed to proselytize for Anthroposophy, the world view that underlies Waldorf education.[8] Rather, the Waldorf teacher works pedagogically on the basis of the Anthroposophical understanding of how people learn and develop. Third, the central objective of teaching is to create an environment in which the students can discover themselves. Fourth, in order to enter upon this path of self-discovery, the school is a coeducational school. Fifth, also to support the students' inner growth, the students cannot fail classes. Instead, the more advanced students learn to help the slower students in their class community. Six, the students stay with the same teacher during the first eight years of their school career. In this way the teacher has a chance to develop a deeper relationship and gain more in-depth knowledge of the student. Also, the students will start to form a tight-knit community.

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[6] Murphy: 1991.

[7] For a description of the Stuttgart school's organizational structure, see the account of Stuttgart Waldorf teacher Hemleben (1962) and Tuebingen Waldorf teacher Lindenberg (1993).

[8] See p. 18 for a full discussion of Anthroposophy.

From 1919 on, just as its governance structure, so Waldorf's curricular facade was unusual. To avoid fragmentation, the central subjects are divided into larger units and are taught in two-hour, and three-week long blocks. These "main lessons" take place in the beginning of each school day and are taught by the "class teacher." The teacher who stays with the class for the first eight grades, the "class teacher," instructs these main lessons, not according to textbooks but through his or her own curriculum design. Just as the teachers are authors of their own lessons, students are to author their own texts: with illustrations, essays, and thematically relevant verses they compose their own " main lesson books." The other lessons of the day are taught by subject-matter specialists. After that main lesson, subjects follow that require on-going repetition and practice, such as foreign languages, music and hand work, gym and a form of body movement called "eurythmy." [9] Then, after ninth grade, the main lesson is taught by subject-matter specialists, and students are divided into groups of those who concentrate more on sciences and math, and those who focus more on vocational studies. Foreign language instruction of English and French begins already in first grade. Thus, students pick up these languages when they are still naturally imitating just as they learn their mother tongue. Grammar is learned later, because it requires a different kind of skill: not spontaneous imitation of speech but the study of rules.

Steiner's program represented an innovative blend of the old and the new. In this Waldorf curriculum, all treasures of German culture had their place: in the lower grades, Grimm's fairy tales and stories of Norse gods; passages from the German classics Parsival and Faust in high school. Indeed, the school's curriculum exemplified all that was regarded as the best in German humanistic schooling. However, the frame was new. Steiner embedded the traditional education in a novel vision of school: growth was developmental and children needed to simultaneously develop intellectual, emotional and social capacities.

The mystery of dissemination

[9] See p. 13 for a full discussion of eurythmy.

Surprisingly, this German reform traveled well. Steiner lived to see the opening of four further Waldorf schools: two in Germany, one in Holland and one in England. By 1938, already nine Waldorf schools existed in five different countries.[10] One of these countries was the U.S.A.

The first American Waldorf school was founded in 1928. By 1950, American families oriented towards German culture had enough interest in Waldorf to found and sustain three more schools on America's East Coast. Admittedly, four alternative schools founded over 22 years hardly marks a mass movement. However, four German alternative schools in such a foreign setting presents a puzzle. Why did Waldorf not fade but instead take root?

And so it did: at first slowly, then with increasing seed. In the first two decades, only four further schools were founded on U.S. soil. Then the tide changed. In the mid-60's, a time of heightened sense of crisis in education, Waldorf in the U.S. became more than a narrow band of citizens' special interest. The private school landscape became populated by an increasing number of schools following the Stuttgart design. Waldorf became a social movement.[11] Just as a hundred years before leaders of the public-school movement had mobilized their fellow citizens,[12] so now educators such as David Elkind, Joseph Chilton Pearce and Ernest Boyer began to speak out for Waldorf. These reformers gathered a larger group of American parents and educators in their wake, all seeking alternative forms of education. Further reminiscent of the public education movement of the mid-nineteenth century, the 1960's saw the rise of regular Waldorf educational gatherings such as the Anthroposophical Summer Conference in Spring Valley, New York. Conferences of this type were devoted to education, but more importantly to the building of a community of Waldorf believers. These men and women shared a vision of cultural reform. Their vehicle was education. In the two decades that followed, the numbers rose from ten schools in 1967 to seventy five in 1989. Since then Waldorf has stepped onto yet another,

[10] Raab: 1982; von Baravalle: 1967.

[11] In my use of the term "social movement" I follow Joseph Gusfield's 1974 definition: social movements are "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward...change" (Gusfield: 1974, as quoted in Tyack & Hansot: 1982, p. 44).

[12] Tyack & Hansot: 1982.

dramatically different stage. In the 1990's for the first time Waldorf came into the public sector. Now over 100 schools in the U.S. are calling themselves "Waldorf" schools.[13]

A look at the world-wide spread of Waldorf offers insight into the extreme diversity of settings to which Waldorf has spread: from Europe to North and South America to Asia.[14] Waldorf not only crossed historic and geographic boundaries, but also socioeconomic lines. Initially, the reform targeted a blue-collar population. The first Waldorf school started with 256 students, of whom approximately 75% were the children of workers in the Stuttgart Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory. Over time, the school moved from a working-class to a middle-class student body. Today in Germany the majority of parents are in business or academics, as revealed by a study of income and education levels of Waldorf parents.[15]

Germany is not the only country in which Waldorf has become a middle-class phenomenon. Waldorf schools in the West exist predominantly in middle-class surroundings. As in Germany, so in England, Holland, and the United States, the affluent parent population is able to afford private school tuition. Yet, today, after seventy years, Waldorf is moving back to serve less wealthy communities around the globe. Where proponents of other school systems have resigned or have made peace with the status quo, Waldorf pilots are taking off. Whether one looks at the inner cities of Sao Paulo, Brazil, or Santiago, Chile, at schools founded in the heart of Zagreb, or on the West Bank, Waldorf schools are no longer limited to serving the middle class.[16] Since the opening of the Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee's inner city in 1991, Waldorf has begun to spread beyond middle class borders in America.[17] Riding the crest of charter and voucher legislation, six charter Waldorf schools have been founded, and a host of Waldorf charter initiatives are under way. Five of these public Waldorf initiatives are in urban districts, from Sacramento, San Diego and Los Angeles, California, to Detroit, Michigan, and Manhattan, New York. In this wide range of schools, teachers intend to follow the unmistakable Waldorf rituals, thus

[13] AWSNA:1995, Boston: 1996.
[14] Mattke: 1994.
[15] Leber: 1974, p.70.
[16] Mattke: 1994; Almon: 1993; Penfold: 1994; Pinskii: 1994; Valantin: 1994; Ziemska: 1994; Mildeova: 1994.
[17] Ruenzel: 1995; Staley: 1993.

"remembering" the past. These similarities in ethos and curriculum are particularly striking in view of the absence of a ruling board.

The first school proudly carried the word "free" in its title: "Freie Waldorfschule Uhlandshoehe Stuttgart." This emphasis on freedom has lasted in terms of governance. There is no equivalent to the centralized organizational structure which explains Catholic schools' historical endurance, as recounted in a recent careful study of Catholic schools.[18] Nor is there an equivalent to the state-affiliated administration that maintains the public school system in the U.S. In The One Best System, David Tyack records the formation of an educational bureaucracy in states and local districts that served to maintain a public school system.[19] No comparable external organ oversees Waldorf schools. In fact, maintaining independence from the public education system is perceived by Waldorf educators as an important commitment.[20]

Just as there are no external bureaucratic structures, so there are no internal bureaucratic hierarchy that could help explain this reform's survival. Waldorf schools do not have principals. They are faculty-run. Moreover, though most Waldorf schools share certain forms, there is no one standard school organization. In the words of one faculty member of the teacher training college in New York, "each school is striving to find the structures and relationships that best fit its circumstances."[21]

The foregoing overview of Waldorf's design offers a complicated picture. The uniformity of Waldorf education is not due to either surrounding national culture, or class identity of the student population, or centralized bureaucratic structures. There is no charter that guides Waldorf schools. There is a diversity of settings and lack of bureaucratic structures. No Vatican mandates beeswax. No district office prescribes blue moons. Clearly, in Waldorf the traditional types of bureaucratic control that could account for the schools' uniformity are absent. The forms of propagation of Waldorf schools are less apparent. Perhaps the place to look is not in governance structures, but rather in less tangible elements that shape how people define themselves and

[18] Bryk, Lee & Holland: 1993.
[19] Tyack: 1974.
[20] Almon: 1994; Boston: 1996; Barnes: 1995; Lamb: 1996, 1995; McDermott: 1995.
[21] Schaefer: 1995, p. 20.

others around them.

If there is no formal regulatory system keeping aspects of Waldorf consistent yet adaptable over time, we have to understand the semiotic features of the Waldorf schools that could have helped create consistency and steer adaptations.

The semiotic dynamics of message transmission, I propose, holds the secret of Waldorf's sustained identity. It seems that Waldorf's guidance and governance come from norms and shared beliefs. The memory of the founder, the collegial structures and the world view all provide direction.The task now is to identify how these disparate elements interact with each other. Here "remembering meaning" plays a crucial role.

Constructing the "memory map" of Waldorf

Construction of the institution's memory map involves recording the rituals and symbols which serve one of two purposes: orienting actions in the present and recalling a shared past. We begin our memory mapping with the institution's origin story. When one inquires about the essentials of Waldorf education, it is striking how often the foundation story surfaces.[22]

The institution's foundation story. The example of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, offers important guidance. New faculty and parents learn about it. The Waldorf training program involves the study of Rudolf Steiner's views on education as he developed them in the first Waldorf school. Waldorf instructors read about what Steiner did in that Stuttgart school, consider his lectures to the Stuttgart teachers, and learn to follow this school's example.[23] Also, faculty study the biographies of the first circle of Waldorf teachers active in the Stuttgart school.[24] Through examination of this school and founder, Waldorf educators today receive direction in virtually all aspects of a school's operation, its teaching methods, even the physical architecture of a Waldorf

[22] See, for example, the information sheet sent around on the internet's "Steiner list" for those interested in Waldorf: Frequently asked questions about Waldorf: listserve@sjuvm.
[23] Steiner: 1919/1981; 1919/1988.
[24] See, for example, Hemleben & Tautz: 1979.

school.

Not all foundation stories in Waldorf receive the kind of attention Stuttgart does. The first American Waldorf schools in New York and Kimberton, Pennsylvania, have their own colorful past. But the memory of these stories has remained local. In New York some retired faculty can remember the group of teachers who started in an upper west side apartment and ventured to Stuttgart, armed with German-English dictionaries, in the summer of 1928 to learn Waldorf pedagogy.[25] In Kimberton, there are witnesses ready to recount the day the magnate couple Mable Pew and Alarik Myrin made the decision to start a Waldorf school on their land.[26] Neither founding has been incorporated in the canon of memories invoked to explain Waldorf to Americans. The Stuttgart founding, however remote in time and space, holds that central place.

Along with the school opening, the first teacher training has a secure place in the Waldorf tale. Teacher training centers like Sacramento have their own interesting foundation accounts. But again, they are not used in the narrative that tells of Waldorf in America. Granted, the twenty-first birthday of Rudolf Steiner College was observed with one short but vivid article in the Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in America, and with a comment in Renewal, the Waldorf journal for education.[27] Yet, by contrast, along with the school founding, the story of the first teacher training of 1919 is told and re-told. The "Frequently asked questions about Waldorf education," a list composed on the internet by Waldorf advocates for interested parents, does not mention the founding of any U.S. schools and merely lists U.S. schools and student numbers. These foundings are not part of the operational memory of this institution. The Stuttgart founding and teacher training are. Indeed, the internet list, wherein Waldorf is boiled down to its most essential facts, does contain an account of the day Emil Molt "asked Steiner to establish and lead a school for the children of the factory's employees...and, after a training period for the prospective teachers, ...the Free

[25] Personal interview with retired New York Waldorf teacher Henry Barnes: February 4, 1994; and former Waldorf teacher John Alexandra: June 2, 1992.
[26] Personal interview with retired Kimberton, PA, Waldorf teacher Edward Stone: December 5, 1996. See also on this point E. Stone's manuscript monograph, "Stories related to Kimberton Waldorf school: the first fifty years: 1941 - 1991," a rich inventory of the Kimberton School's local memory.
[27] J.Blatchford: Winter 1996 - 97, pp. 23 - 24; R. Koetzsch: Spring-Summer 1997, p. 40.

Waldorf School was opened."[28]

Any institution's memory reaches well beyond the recall of the historic fact. The recollection rises above the mere remembering of events to acquire culture-forming properties.[29] The Waldorf community organizes itself around ritualistic occasions for remembrance. Key semiotic "road signs" -- inductions, seasonal festivals, curricular rituals, architecture and birthdays -- structure these rituals. Each of these points to the past.[30]

Inductions: Teacher training and teacher networks. Waldorf places professional development at the heart. Becoming a Waldorf teacher requires one to three years of teacher training. Four teacher training colleges exist in America: one in Sacramento, one in Los Angeles, one in Keene, New Hampshire, and one outside New York City. In its design, this training is modeled after the first teacher training, held in Stuttgart, summer 1919, in the three weeks before the first school opened its doors. The difference is, today teachers do not hear the living voice of Steiner; they read the transcripts. Significantly, the training opens with a study of Steiner's morning lectures on the Waldorf theory of human development: The Study of Man .[31]

Moreover, there is an in-service component to Waldorf training today, again mirroring the first school. Throughout the year, a lively network of teachers gathers for intimate study groups and a few larger conferences. At these conferences, teachers study Steiner texts, learn to design Waldorf textbooks with their students,[32] and share classroom experience, as was done in the first teacher conferences in the summers

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[28] Frequently asked questions about Waldorf: listserve@sjuvm.

[29] Cf. Connerton: 1989.

[30] For four recent important studies on a community's memory process, see P. Connerton, How societies remember (1989), B. Anderson, Imagined communities (1991), J. Fentress & C. Wickham, Social memory: New perspectives on the past (1992), and J.E. Young, The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning (1993). Each of these works examines the ways in which the act of memory itself is community-shaping. Viewed together this new body of scholarship highlights the need for studies of the memory work within single institutions, such as the one I execute here.

[31] See p. 2.

[32] The Waldorf teachers do not depend on textbooks; they organize the material themselves. Likewise, students do not rely on printed texts . They report on the material in "main lesson books" which they decorate with subject-related illustrations, an art which needs to be learned by teachers and students alike.

and fall of 1921 and 1922.[33]

In teacher education and teacher meetings memory is created and transmitted: they provide collegial direction on how to make use of this past. Teachers discuss Study of Man, practice telling the fairy tales such as Little Red Riding Hood before their colleagues; they re-draw at the blackboard and on paper the drawings characteristic of Waldorf classrooms.[34] Memory is enacted. [35]

Annual festivals and daily verses. "Festivals serve to connect humanity with the rhythms of nature and of the cosmos. They join children to the seasonal moods of the year in a festive way." These are the very words of Steiner which were not only taught to the first generation of teachers but are present in the memory of every Waldorf teacher today. At trainings, teachers learn about the festivals. Around the world, the four seasonal festivals, "Michaelmas" in the fall, Christmas, Easter and "St. John" in the summer are all celebrated in Waldorf classrooms with poems, song and plays .

As festivals weave through the year, so verses lace themselves through the school weeks and days . At weekly faculty meetings, a Steiner stanza marks the beginning. Together teachers recite:

> The healthy social life is found
> when in the mirror of each human soul
> the whole community finds its reflection,
> and when in the community
> the virtue of each one is living.[36]

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[33] An organization based in Stuttgart, called the Waldorf Association ("Bund der Freien Waldorf Schulen"), arranges conferences internationally. The American Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) organizes teacher conferences in this country.

[34] See Appendix 1.

[35] For evidence of the impact on a group's cohesive direction of such teacher gatherings as described here, see R. Barth, Improving schools from within (1990). Barth describes four components of "collegial" work settings: teachers talking together about student work; teachers developing curriculum together; teachers observing one another teach; and teachers teaching one another. Each of these four is a typical component of Waldorf teacher get together.

[36] For the text of the faculty-meeting and morning verses recorded here I thank Waldorf teacher Monica Alexandra (Personal interview : March 12, 1997) and Waldorf graduate Jennifer Abbot (Personal interview: March 17, 1997). I am grate full to both for their help in providing me with precise insights.

When we look to daily school practice, activities are also framed around passages Steiner has written:

> I look into the world
> In which the sun is shining
> In which the stars are sparkling
> In which the stones repose.
> The living plants are growing
> The feeling animals move
> The human being, ensouled,
> Gives dwelling to the spirit...

Guided by their teacher, children across the globe start their day with this verse Steiner wrote. Through recitation, the words go to deeper levels of participants' consciousness.[37]

So far, we have traced ways in which the memory of the first school and founder are recalled through the spoken and written word. But the recall of the days of Steiner and Stuttgart do not stop at texts and verses. The memory reaches other layers of today's teacher's doings.

Curricular ritual: Eurythmy One of the most central is eurythmy, a form of dance through which the institution remembers its past. Specific motions correspond to distinct notes and sounds . Regular eurythmy troupes, such as the one based in Stuttgart, tour internationally to perform. [38] These performances are the public face of a curricular innovation. Eurythmy is an activity which teachers learn to perform with their students.[39] Steiner choreographed a series of pedagogical exercises for children to help them strengthen and harmonize their body and their life forces. A constitutive element of Waldorf is the awareness that the choreography in eurythmy is "developed

[37] Human development researcher Betty Hart's study Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children (1995)offer s evidence for the impact of the spoken and heard word in a child's world.
[38] See Appendix 2.
[39] See Appendix 3.

by Steiner."[40] As in verse recitation, so in eurythmy the recall reaches deeper than only the cognitive level. When teachers guide their students in re-tracing these forms, their feet know they are re-creating figures drawn by Steiner.[41]

Waldorf architecture. Looking across the international range of Waldorf schools we note a striking similarity in style. In particular, the structure of school facades and entry ways display parallel constructions. Similarities do not stop there. Inside and out, Waldorf schools' building design avoids straight angles. This is in accordance with Steiner's advice: avoid straight angles to stimulate those inside not to be "block heads" but to think independently and creatively.[42]

Memory plays a role on two levels in Waldorf's architecture. Each construct models Steiner's indication. It also copies Steiner's own architectural design. The buildings follow the example of the first structure built on this principle, called the "Goetheanum," the headquarter building of the Anthroposophical Society in Dornach,[43] Switzerland . Hence the very architecture there presents the past to the present . [44]

The architecture of buildings is mirrored in the form of crafts items, and in the design of letters . The same motifs recur throughout Waldorf's world of physical objects. Even in such details as the way a wooden candle holder or box are carved, or the letter "B" is drawn, the Waldorf practitioner has the opportunity to experience how odd angles enliven the spirit.[45]

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[40] Piening & Lyons: 1979, p. 104.

[41] See "Metamorphosis of the figure eight," Appendix 4. I was made aware of this form's significance for Waldorf instruction through Eurythmist Gabriella Randozza (Personal interview: March 13, 1997). I am grateful to her help in providing me with precise insights. For cognitive data supporting the impact of physical activity on memory, see H. Gardner, Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences (1993/1983).

[42] Raab: 1982.

[43] See Appendix 5. Dornach is small town by Basel just across the German border where Steiner was given land by a follower to build an Anthroposophical center. The Goetheanum -- the Free University for Spiritual Science -- has remained the movement's world-center to this day .

[44] The regard for the role of architecture is discussed in "The Waldorf school builds," (Raab: 1982). The author charts the spread of the movement by tracing the school design's inner rationale as pathway for education, as well as its adaptation to different environments. Interest in learning of the connections comes to the fore when we note that, for example, in America this past summer the Aspen Waldorf School hosted a major conferences on architecture: "Architecture, the arts, and community building" (Anthroposophy: Calendar of Events, March - May 1997).

[45] See Appendix 6.

Time ritual: Stuttgart birthdays. In order to "hear" the voice of the past, an effective ritual of remembering can be seen in the traditional world-wide participation in the anniversaries of the Mother School. The most notable in recent memory was the Stuttgart school's 75th birthdays.

The celebration was framed clearly as not only a feast of the Stuttgart school, but of "Waldorf world wide." Many in the Stuttgart area gathered on the Waldorf school's grounds to see performances, view art displays, tour the school and have Stuttgart's best coffee and cake with former and current students, teachers and parents. A well-documented article in the local paper celebrated how the factory school of yore had outlived its shut-down under National Socialism and now celebrated its birthday with over 1000 students. But also the Stuttgart paper looked beyond local import: the article's author closed with the observation that this Stuttgart school had spawned an international school movement devoted to teaching "how to think independently rather than what to think."[46]

Further cementing the connection between the school and the movement, one Stuttgart teacher issued a publication, "Waldorf schools worldwide" [47] in honor of the occasion. The book documented the global spread into diverse contexts of Waldorf schools. One group of Stuttgart teacher educators, in collaboration with UNESCO, put together an exhibit of Waldorf students' artwork. The show was sent on an international tour.[48] Closer to our home, in New York, a band of Waldorf advocates persuaded Governor Mario Cuomo to issue a bill declaring May 1994 "Waldorf education month" for New York State. Significantly, all layers of society were called upon to celebrate this turn-of-the-century German event. However, even more important for the institution's memory than such annual birthdays of the first school, is the way the birth of the movement itself is kept present.

Time ritual: The foundation stone verse. The story of "the foundation stone verse" offers keen insight into the Waldorf memory and Waldorf institution. The story of this verse

[46] K.Hoffmann, Stuttgarter Zeitung: September 8, 1989,p. 19.
[47] Mattke: 1994.
[48] Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners e.V.: 1994.

sheds light on the schools' representative institution, the Stuttgart school, and the world view followers' representative institution, Anthroposophy's headquarters: the Goetheanum in Dornach. There are three events, only one of which has shaped the memory of the institution, to allow it "to imagine itself." [49]

Steiner adopted the ancient ritual of laying the foundation stone when he ceremoniously lay the stone for the first Waldorf school's own building on December 16, 1921. A verse was enclosed in a pentagon made of copper [50] within the stone: "May here rule what spirit-light in goodness, from surety of heart, from steadfastness of soul, can render to the young..." [51] All teachers present signed the document before the stone went into the earth. It was deemed appropriately serious that a photograph was taken.[52] The event was remembered by teachers and students present. Yet, as the foundation stories of the New York and Kimberton schools, this remained a local memory.

The foundation stone ritual that has shaped the institution's memory is the laying of the first stone of the Goetheanum, Christmas eve 1923.[53] The verse Steiner attached to that event is recited to this day by all those Waldorf teachers who consider themselves Anthroposophists. Steiner had conducted a similar ritual of laying the foundation stone with the first Anthroposophical headquarters, the Goetheanum, in Dornach on September 2, 1913.[54] This, too, remained an unnoted event. A third stone laying has made its way into canonical memory.

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[49] This metaphor I borrow from B. Anderson (1983).J.E.Young in The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning (1993) sheds light on the power of memorialization for memory, of which Steiner's gesture of laying the foundation stone is, so I propose, one well executed example.

[50] See Appendix 7 .

[51] Personal interview with retired Stuttgart Waldorf teacher Hilde Berthold: March 18, 1997. For full citation, and English translation from 1928, see Appendix 8.

[52] See Appendix 8.

[53] For a full record of this event, see Steiner, GA 260: December 25, 1923.

[54] Significantly, over the years, 1913 - 1923, Steiner grew increasingly dissatisfied with his "institution of Waldorf". Repeatedly, he observed that the institution was not being remembered right: it was rigidifying. Members were not taking initiative to undertake new ventures. They were leading an unimaginative "plantlike" existence (GA 223, p. 112). He had only one thing to say about the Society: he would rather not have anything anymore to do with it. "All that those committees do repulses me" (Unpublished letter from March, 1923, Archive of "Steiner Nachlass-Verwaltung", quoted from Lindenberg: 1988, p. 505). This dissatisfaction lead to his decision to implant the next foundation stone "into the heart." In the midst of this growing discontent on Steiner's part, the trauma of the arson befell the organization.

When through arson on New Year's Eve night, 1922-1923, the Goetheanum building was burnt down, Steiner called a meeting to all members of the organization for Christmas day 1923, to attend the laying of the first stone of the Goetheanum re-built. There the founder turned to all and announced that he would now give the institution a new kind of stone: not a physical rock, but a verse. He wanted to place it not in the earth, but into the hearts of those present .[55]

Remarkably, this moment is remembered. Not every Waldorf teacher will know the exact date of the event, but every one will have knowledge of the "foundation stone meditation," the verse Steiner wrote to accompany this event. Despite its length, most German teachers will know it by heart. In the U.S. teachers will be familiar with it. To this day, regional conferences are held in the U.S. and abroad about the foundation stone meditations.[56]

Though certainly provocative and artistic, a glance at the verse's last stanza shows that this is not an easy-to-remember ditty:

> Spirit-Light
> Day-radiant light
> Light that gives warmth
> Light that enlightens
> Light divine...
> -- Rudolf Steiner[57]

Yet, it is remembered and its memory shapes the community. This past July, one Anthroposophists observed that the foundation stone verse had kept his Steiner-text study group together: it gave the guidelines for a constructive "method of conversation."[58] With the verse as guide, and without bureaucracy or authority above them, these individuals were inspired to work effectively together. We may conclude

[55] GA 260, pp. 60 - 91.
[56] May 1997, for example, one weekend is devoted to the topic: Foundation Stone Conference and Meeting (Cf. Anthroposophy: Calendar of Events, March - May 1997).
[57] Cited in Newsletter: Winter 1996-1997, p. 14.
[58] The verse let them see that conversation "is process in which there is a conversion of human soul...from one individual to another" (Steiner List, February 7, 1996).

that this insight completely accords with the founder's original intent.

Three meanings of Waldorf's semiotic map

Two points are evident from the map I have sketched here. First, all rituals and symbols, whether building or dance, verse or feast, point to the presence of the founder and first school. Second, though by no means confined to the study of Steiner texts, all is organized around what Steiner has said, whether in lectures or poetry.[59]

This second point on text and word leads us to a further observation on the community involved in this activity of remembering. In a thoughtful analysis of the "scriptural presence" of biblical verses, the scholar of comparative religion Wilbur Smith observed that "the meaning of a text as scripture lies not in the text, but in the minds and hearts" of the people.[60] Following Smith's insight, I suggest that Waldorf followers form a "textual community." Reading and reciting Steiner verses is for the Waldorf supporters what meditation is for the Buddhists and attending mass is for Catholics. It would be misleading to call Waldorf advocates a "scriptural" community because Waldorf, unlike Catholicism or Buddhism, is not a religious system. Yet, reading the text does not define the community, or explain the reform's persistence over time. The reverence for the Steiner texts ties the pedagogy into a world view in a unique way. In the words of one former Waldorf student, "Anthroposophy, as such, is never explained in Waldorf schools: it's practiced. Analysis of the educational philosophy is not part of the philosophy."[61] In this sense, the third meaning of Waldorf's semiotic map points beyond itself to Anthroposophy.

Embedded in the design of Waldorf pedagogy is this belief system of Anthroposophy, a comprehensive system of theory and practice. The full breadth of Anthroposophy becomes apparent in Steiner's definition of the world view's scope: it

[59] In his analysis of medieval society, B. Stock employed the term "textual community" to (1990) make us aware of communities defined by a text while not necessarily reading the text.
[60] Smith: 1993, p. 91. Already W.Ong called for redirecting attention from the text to the reality of those who engage with the text when he stated: "All texts are part of discourse...Texts have meaning only insofar as the are converted into the extra textual" (1986, p. 149).
[61] Hale: 1997, p. 84.

is a theory "devoted to the study of nature and the essence of human life." [62] It is important to emphasize that the Anthroposophical organization, the Anthroposophical Society, does not formally oversee Waldorf schools. No mandatory structures link one to the other. [63]

All the indicated rituals together form consitutive elements in Waldorf's powerful liturgy of remembrance. The process of remembering allows the Waldorf idea to cross demarcation lines of class, time and culture. The charisma of Waldorf lies in the manifold ways of sacramentally re-producing the past as reality for the present and guidance for the future. Thus, Waldorf has created a semiotic solution that has guarded the reform from disintegration while allowing it to spread.

[62] Steiner, GA 211: April 15, 1922.

[63] The relationship between Anthroposophy and Waldorf is organizationally diffuse and indirect. This lack of formal ties is in keeping with the founder's directives. Steiner noted in public lectures and private conversations that Anthroposophy should not be structurally linked to Waldorf schools. As he put it to the Stuttgart teachers: "Waldorf education is not a world view;...it is a method" (Steiner: 1924, 217). Though Waldorf was perceived by its founder as method, not as world view, and "Anthroposophical believers" as well as "Waldorf advocates" emphasize this point, the relationship between Waldorf and Anthroposophy is an intimate one. The view of human development on which the Waldorf method is based *is* Anthroposophy. This belief system offers Waldorf practitioners a detailed set of explanations for why they do what they do. The memories of these two institutions converge in the reciting of the "foundation stone verse."

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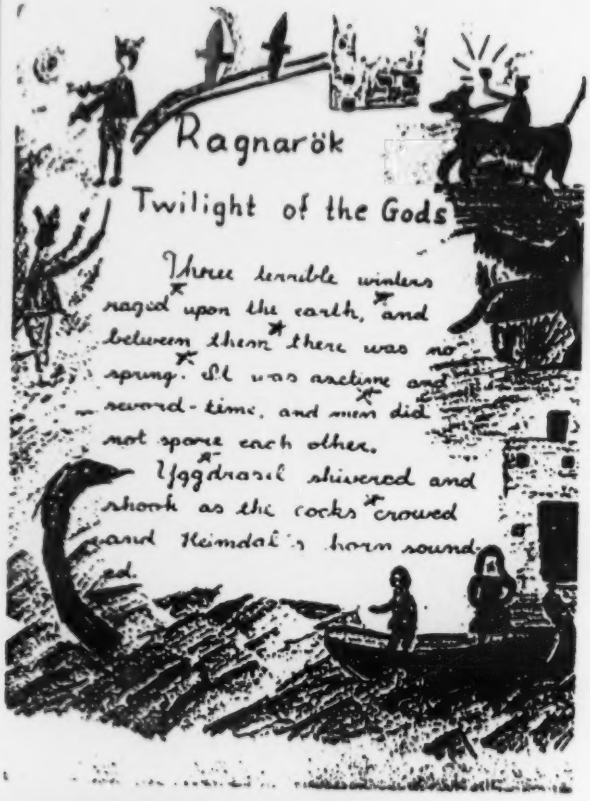
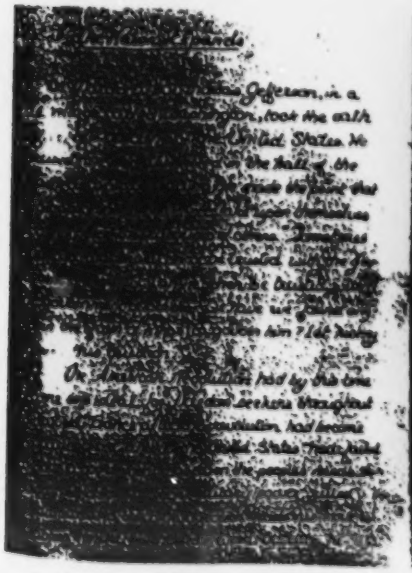
APPENDIX 1

A page from a fourth-grader's main lesson book.


Ragnarök
Twilight of the Gods
Three terrible winters raged upon the earth, and between them there was no spring. It was axetime and sword-time, and men did not spare each other.
Yggdrasil shivered and shook as the cocks crowed and Heimdal's horn sounded.

Pages from an eighth-grade main lesson book—for the study of American History.



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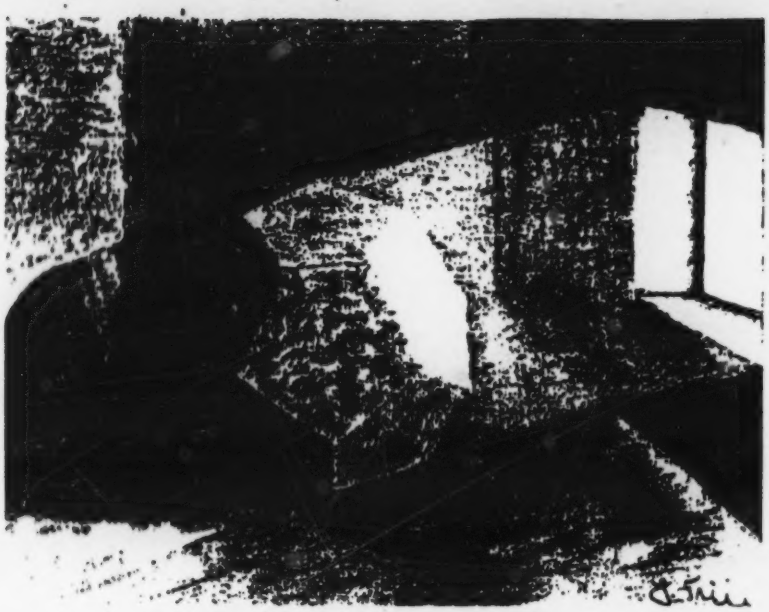

Light and shade studies (Class 7).

Water whirling in eddies.

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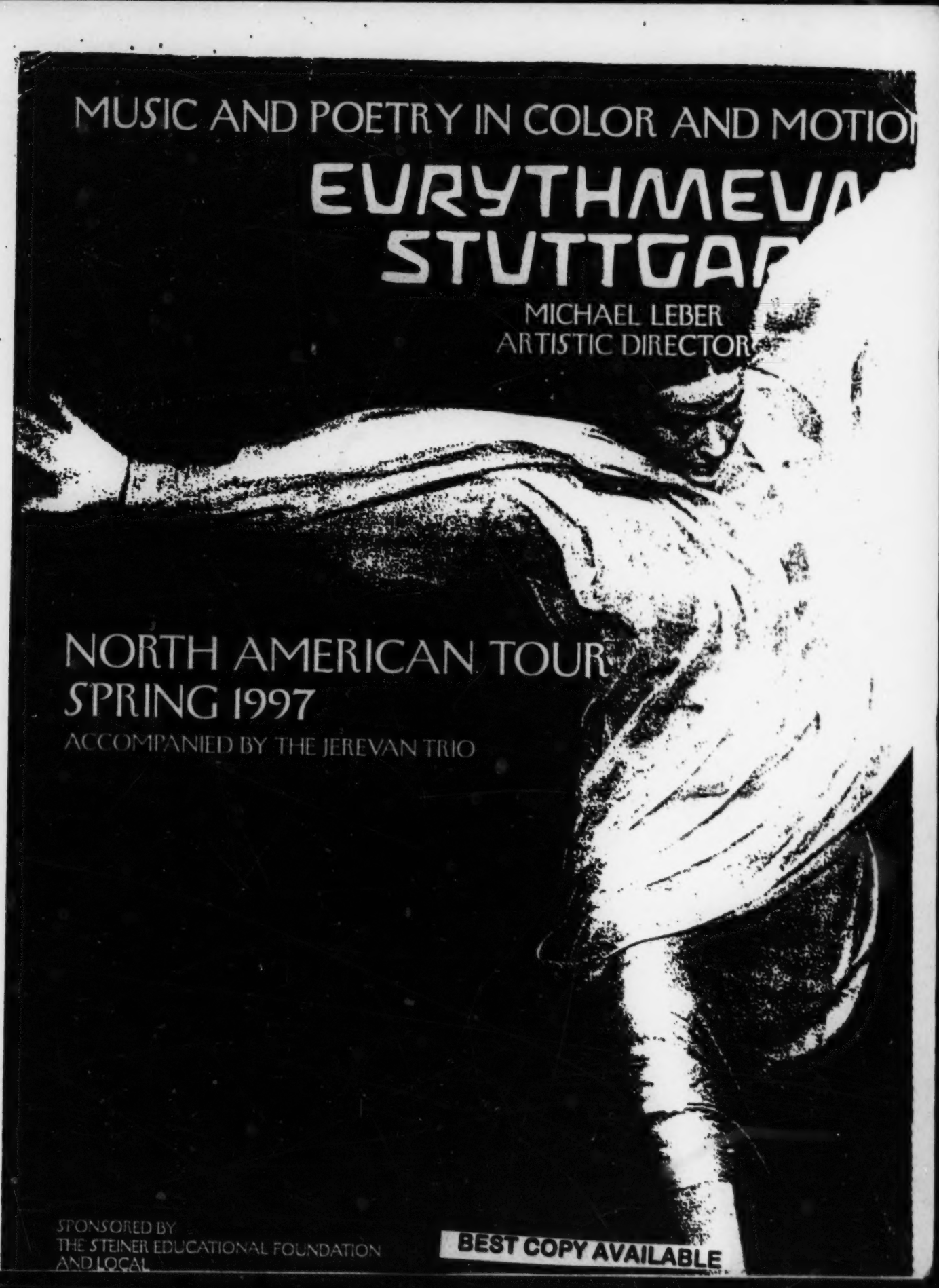
APPENDIX 2



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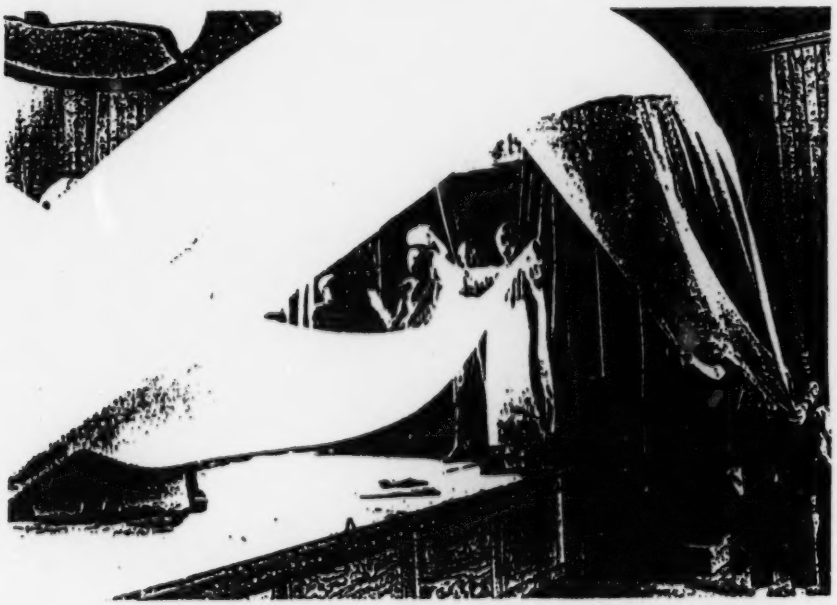
APPENDIX 3

Above: *Eurythmy class at the Kristoffer School.*

Below: *Dramatization of 'The Fisherman and his Wife,' Järna Waldorf School.*



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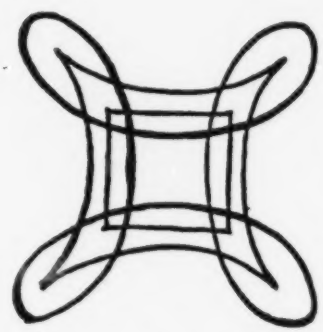
APPENDIX 4

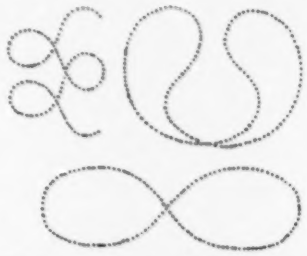


A. Harmonization of three different tempi

B. Rhythmic crescendo

C. Rhythmic exercise developed by Rudolf Steiner

D. Eurythmy exercise developed by Rudolf Steiner



E. Metamorphosis of the figure eight

Some eurythmy forms

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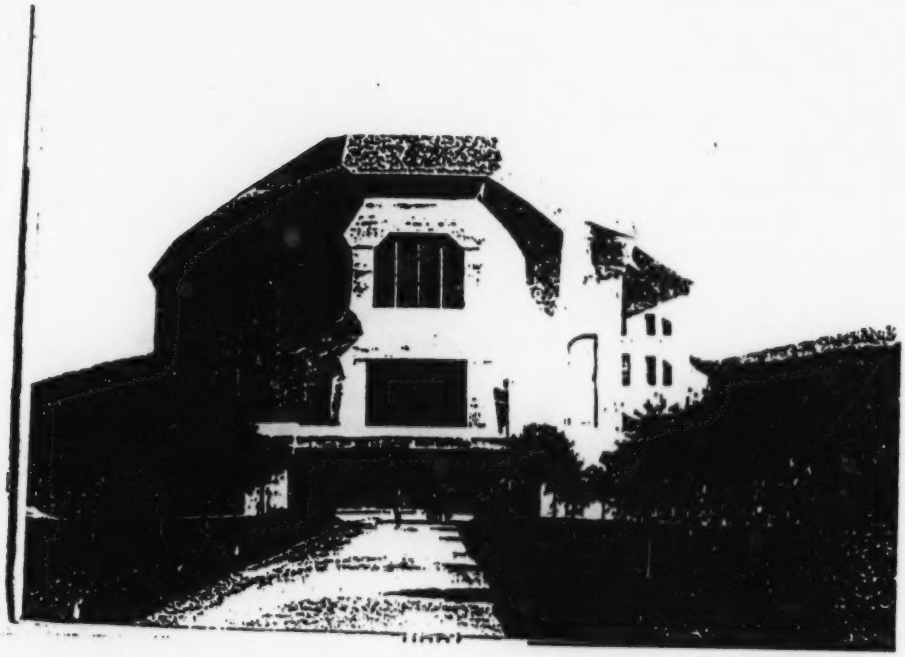
APPENDIX 5



Goetheanum, Dornach.

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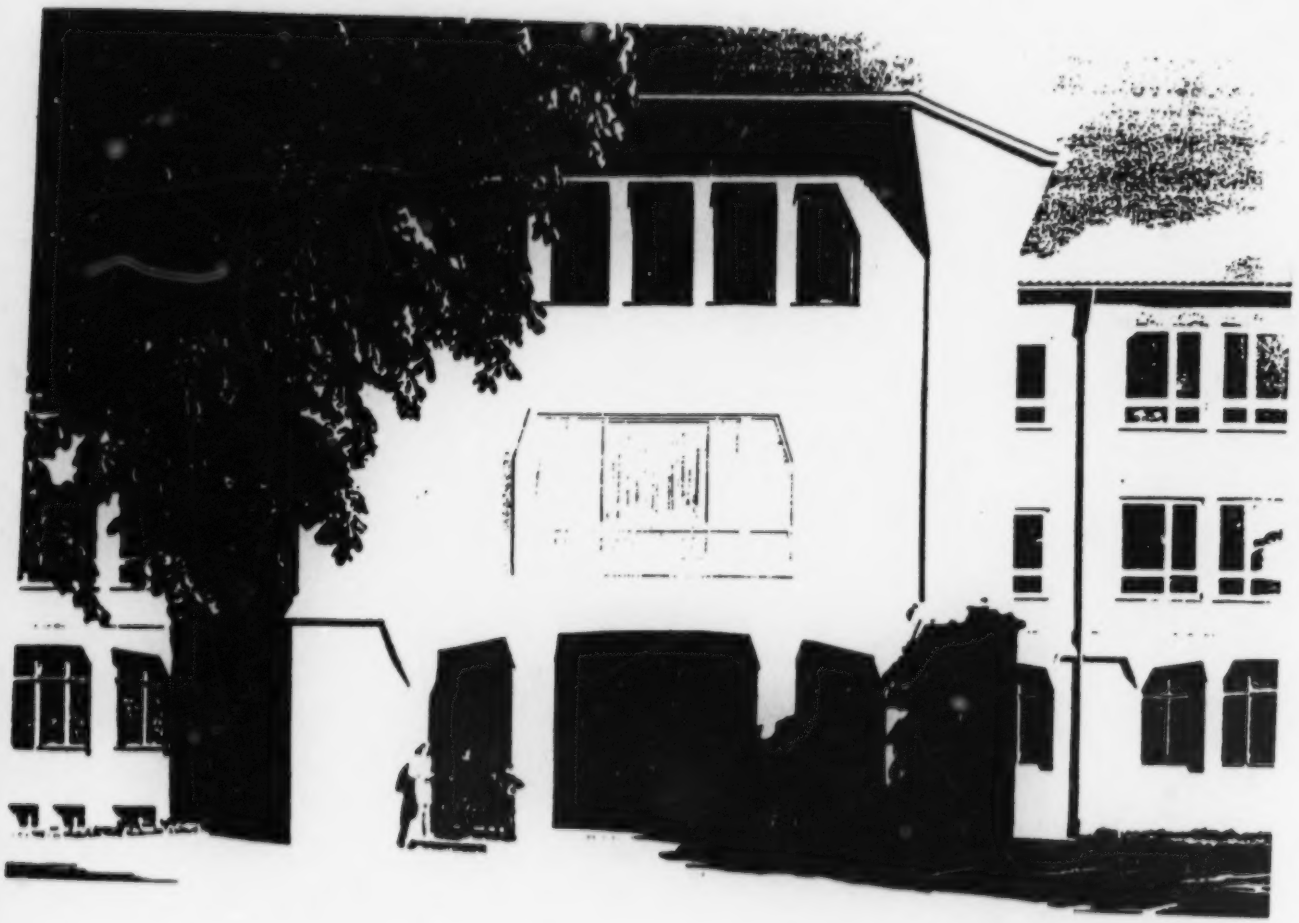
APPENDIX 6



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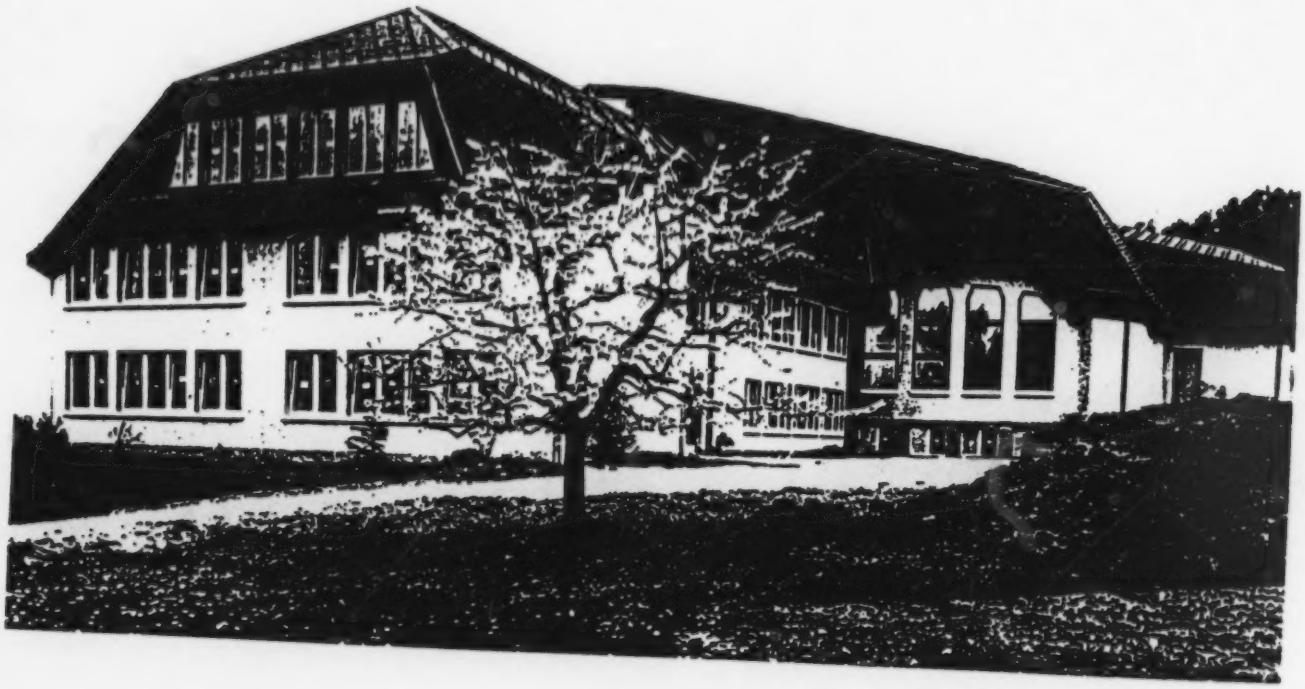

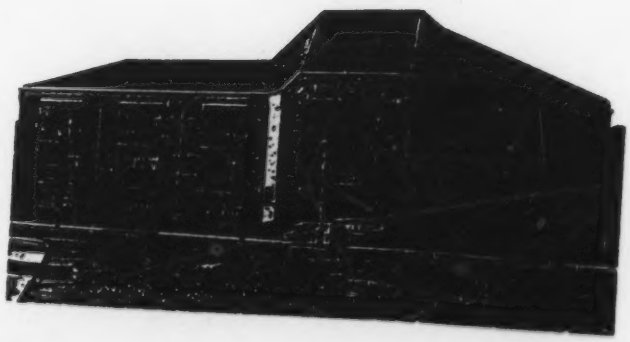

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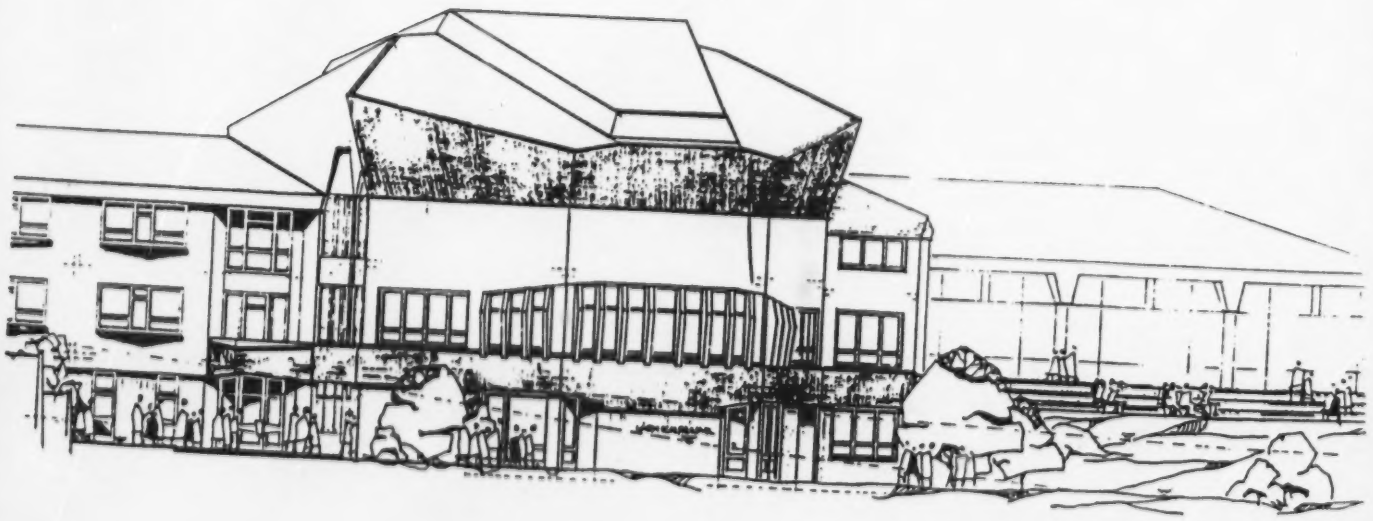

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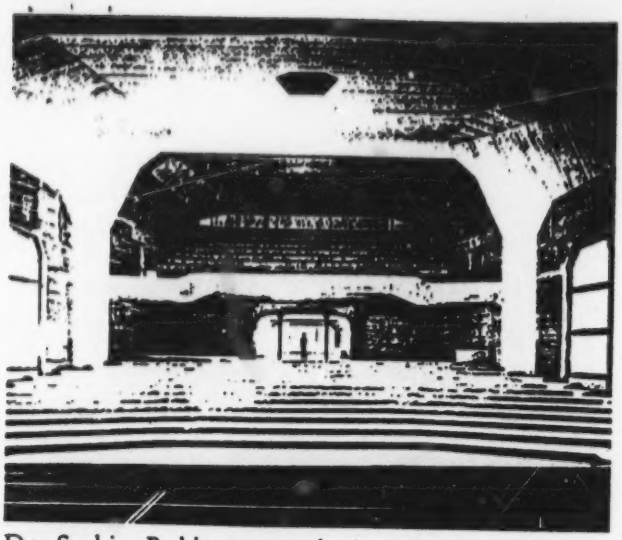
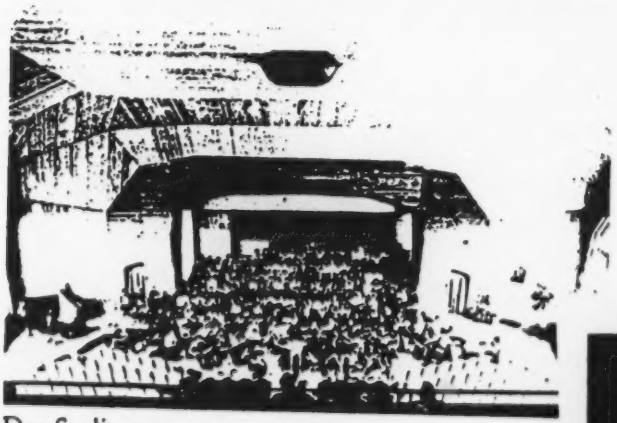
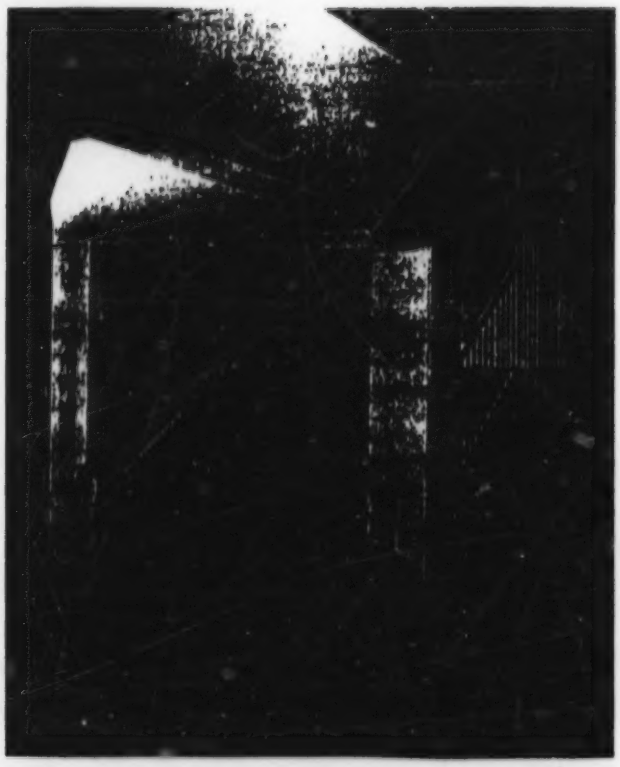


Der Saal im Rohbauzustand.



Das Saalinnere.



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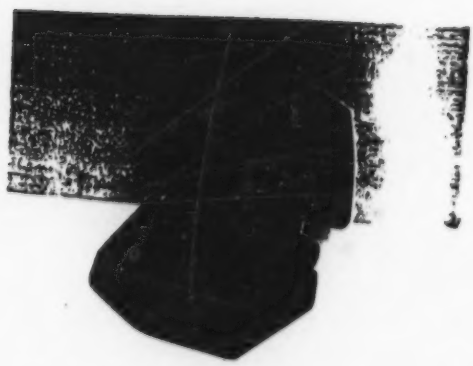
Bookcover design and lettering from a tenth-grade lettering class

Wooden candle-holders—seventh grade.



A carved, hinged box made by an eighth-grader.

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APPENDIX 7

Building of the new Waldorf Teacher Training building, Stuttgart, October 10, 1965 (Bund: 1965).

Stuttgart Waldorf teacher trainers Ernst Schad and Michael Kranich place the copper pentagon containing the building's foundation stone verse in the soil.

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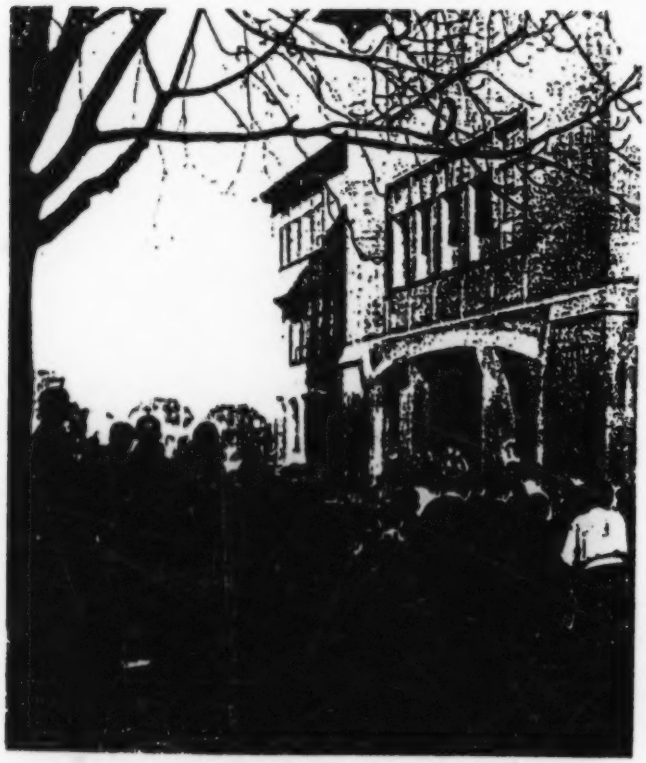
APPENDIX 8

Eine unvergeßliche
Grundsteinlegung



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Foundation Stone for first Waldorf School

December 16, 1921

Es walte, was Geisteskraft in Liebe,
Es wirke, was Geistlicht in Guete
Aus Herzenssicherheit
Und Seelenfestigkeit
In jungen Menschenwesen
Fuer des Leibes Arbeitskraft,
Fuer der Seele Innigkeit,
Fuer des Geistes Helligkeit
Erbringen kann.
Dem sei geweiht dies Staette.
Jugensinn finde in ihr
Kraftbegabte, Lichtergeben
Menschenpflege.

In ihrem Herzen gedenken
Des Geistes, der hier walten soll,
Die, welche den Stein
Zum Sinnbild hier versenken,
Auf dass er festige die Grundlage,
Auf der Leben, walten, wirken soll,
Befreiend Wiesheit,
Erstarkende Geistesmacht,
Sich offenbarendes Geistesleben.
Dies moechten bekennen
In Christi Namen,
In reinen Absichten, In gutem Willen:

Signatories:
school architect;
Rudolf Steiner, Marie Steiner, Emil Molt, all teachers.

English translation
1928.

May here rule what spirit-strength in love,
May here work what Sprit-Light in goodness,
From surety of heart
From steadfastness of soul,
Can render to the young.
For their body's strength in work,
For their soul's intensity,
For their spirit['s clarity.
To this may consecrated be the place:
May the heart of youth here find
Endowed with strength,
Devotion to the light.

Those who bury this stone as a token
Bear in their hearts and minds the spirit
That shall be working here.
This stone may secure the foundations
On which shall live, work and weave
Wisdom that makes free,
Spirit-power that strengthens,
Spirit-light that manifests itself.
This they wish to testify,
In the name of Christ, with pure intentions,
With good will:

Signatories:
school architect;
Rudolf Steiner, Marie Steiner, Emil Molt, all teachers.